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NATURE CONSERVATION NEWS

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THE SEA is still an untamed habitat. Indeed, its whales have been decimated, its beaches blackened with bilge oil from tankers, and its estuaries polluted. But the sea itself is for the most part unmastered. Wherever it touches the land we live on, it instructs us in elemental lessons of physics, chemistry, biology, and many of their subsciences. It is good for the mind as well as the soul to stand in thought at the sea's edge. It makes a person shrink to his proper place in nature.

DURING FIVE CENTURIES, the sea was forced to wait while brave Hollanders diked off the fertile soils of the Rhine delta. During those same centuries, the Great South Beach of Long Island, New York, formed a flimsy barrier between the sea and a little wilderness. Precious plants and animals lived a precarious existence behind tall dunes of sand piled grain upon grain by the littoral currents of the sea and waftings of the wind. While the sea salt and sand blast of the centuries kept the dune top vegetation changing and youthful, ancient holly trees came to dominate the amazingly stable habitat in the protected hollows. Slow-growing and resistant to insects and disease, the hollies have been using the centuries to reach a rare and beautiful maturity in their special niche, the Sunken Forest.

TO STAND IN A HOLLY FOREST is a rarer privilege than standing on the sea's edge. The nature of the place inspires equally cogent thoughts and feelings. Not only does the reality of time impinge upon one's consciousness, but the realization that these trees are refugees from something called civilization makes a mark on one's mind. Men have sought holly for Christmas decorations, for making musical and scientific instruments, toy boats, furniture inlays, and sporting and athletic goods. They have learned to plant and harvest holly as a crop. But where have they sanctified a holly forest as an entity in itself, a creation of a peculiar physical environment coupled with the urge of living things to keep on living? (In the South, one can still find hollywoods; but our culture is more preoccupied with the creation of a western Hollywood.)

The Sunken Forest

Fire Island Beach, L. I., N. Y.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY has taken an active interest in the Sunken Forest. One of our members, Oakleigh Thorne, II, spent last summer determining the ownership of the various sections and negotiating options. He and Mr. and Mrs. James N. Dunlop lead the Conservancy's Sunken Forest Committee. The trustees of Wildlife Preserves Incorporated, a non-profit corporation which is acquiring several natural areas in the vicinity of New York, have agreed to take title to the land until such time as the form of permanent ownership most likely to assure its continued protection can be worked out.

WITH DEVELOPERS EVER ON THE LOOK-OUT for areas on which to build, the Sunken Forest is in great danger. In fact the heart of it would have been bulldozed down for a development before this if Dr. Ernest Osborne of Teachers College at Columbia and two associates had not bid in the parcel at an auction sale last year. Fortunately the entire forest is still intact and can be preserved in its pristine state.

THE HEART OF THE FOREST is in three ownerships. Contributions to date of over $22,000 have enabled us to acquire one of these. Dr. Osborne has given us an option until July 1953 on his section at the price he paid for it--$8,000. The third property presents a critical problem, as our option on it at a price of $26,500 will soon expire. In addition, we hope eventually to be able to obtain the flanking areas so that we will control a tract large enough to keep it truly wild.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY needs your help in this project. The price of the entire Sunken Forest is less than the cost of many a single painting in the Metropolitan Museum. A work of nature like this forest is just as unique and as irreplaceable as a great work of art. Have we not the same obligation to preserve both for posterity?

NEWS FLASHES

The North American Wildlife Conference will be held in the Statler Hotel, Washington, D.C., on March 9, 10, and 11.

A business meeting of the Nature Conservancy will be held in conjunction with the Conference. It will be on March 9, at 2 p.m. in the Potomac Room of the Statler.

The White House Conference on Resources for the Future, previously announced for March, has been postponed until October or later. Exact date has not been set.

Bills in Congress: Two bills have been introduced to provide that 10% of the receipts from national forests be made available for development of their recreational resources and wildlife habitat. These are H.R. 1972, introduces by Congr. Howard H. Baker of Tennessee, and H.R. 2106, introduced by Congr. Oren Harris of Arkansas. Hearings will be held on H.R. 1972 by the House Committee on Agriculture, Clifford R. Hope, Chairman, on March 11.

Congressman Leroy Johnson has reintroduced his bill to prohibit the construction of dams or water projects in national parks and monuments. This is H.R. 1038. Hearings are scheduled on the bill on March 10 before the Subcommittee on Public Lands of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. Chairman of the Subcommittee is Wesley A. D'Ewart of Montana.

The bill to provide for a survey of the natural grassland areas of the U. S. has been reintroduced by Congr. Homer D. Angell (Ore.) as H.R. 214. This bill would authorize the Sec'y of Agriculture to make such a survey with a view to setting aside appropriate natural areas for scientific and educational purposes. The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Agriculture.

RECORD ATTENDANCE AT STATE AND NATIONAL PARKS

Visitors to the national parks and other areas administered by the National Park Service totalled 41,516,664 in the 1952 travel year ended September 30, a record in annual travel to these areas. The 1952 total was almost double that for 1941, the last prewar year, and for 1946.

The National Park Service states that this increase in travel has thrown a terrific added burden on the areas visited. Facilities for visitors have nowhere near kept pace with the demands on them; sewage disposal systems, other sanitary facilities, utilities, and campgrounds have become seriously inadequate in many areas because the Service has lacked funds with which to provide for the doubled load. The Service is troubled by its inability to furnish adequate protection for visitors or the resources it guards. At Yellowstone, for example, where the number of visitors has increased 130% since 1941, it was not able to supply as many ranger man-hours as it did 11 years ago.

In such conditions as these, there is a serious threat to resources that are among the most prized possessions of the American people.

ATTENDANCE AT STATE PARKS throughout the nation totalled approximately 120,723,000 in 1951, with the park systems of New York, Michigan, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and California attracting the most visitors, according to a recent announcement of the National Park Service.

This attendance exceeded by 6% that of 1950 and by 30% that of 1946, the first normal year following World War II, according to the report.

Compilation of these and other statistics pertaining to state parks and their operation is an important phase of the co-operative program between the National Park Service and the states conducted under authority of the Park, Parkway, and Recreational Area Study Act of 1936. The Service has issued two publications entitled "State Park Statistics—1951" and "State Parks—Areas, Acreages, and Accommodations."

INTRODUCTION OF EXOTICS

The Colorado Game and Fish Commission plans to introduce Mysis, a small crustacean, into Colorado lakes. The object is to increase the trout population by providing an additional food supply for them. The Mysis are to be brought in from Alberta. Plan was originally to transfer them last summer but a sharp population drop in the Canadian lake made collecting impossible.

A leading fish parasitologist says that there are strong indications Mysis may be host of parasites. In a study made recently on trout and salmon where Mysis were an important part of the diet, nearly all fish were parasitized. It appears that this introduction could backfire.

Reports indicate that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is still busy importing game birds. These introductions are apparently being made on the basis of the most superficial scientific studies. Two hundred chukar partridges were brought in by air, "the longest flight that live partridges have ever made sitting down". This shipment was headed for Colorado. In addition, the state of New Mexico has received 146 Turkish chukars recently. To date the New Mexico Game Department has released 148 chukars in the Gila National Forest and the Canadian River country.

Both New Jersey and Kentucky are planting Great Plains jack rabbits. In Kentucky 95 rabbits have been planted in 3 different sites. These hares are considered pests, according to Kentucky publications, but it is hoped hunting will keep them in check.

PREDATOR PERSECUTION CONTINUES

ALASKA: "An outstanding job of wolf control on the Arctic slope of the Brooks Range in Alaska, using aircraft, has been reported by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Operating from a base at Uniat, three planes sighted 334 wolves, and made a known kill of 259. This project was established to protect the caribou herds of Alaska which have been rapidly

diminishing, largely through wolf depredations." —News note from U.S. Dept. of the Interior. (How did the caribou manage to survive before airplanes?)

WASHINGTON: "Cougar population on downgrade in Blue Mtns.: Merle Pooshagen, state predator hunter in the Blue Mountain region, is a deciding factor in the population balance of cougars in that area.

"Coyotes, cougars and bobcats are his main prey. He has trapped 200 coyotes since he began work with the Game Department 5 years ago. He takes about 500 predators per year.

"But cougars are the main threat to deer. It is estimated that each cougar kills about 50 deer per year, with an occasional elk thrown in. Only once in a great while will a cougar attack livestock.

"Pooshagen got his first cougar about six months ago, and though he claims he's just learning, he is learning fast. He uses the old Indian-style snare with modern improvements. He uses a small steel cable instead of rope. Once the cougar's head enters the loop, it can do nothing other than tighten." —from Evergreen Sports Letter, Vol. II, No.43, Box 278, Naches, Wash.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

TRUMPETER SWANS were censused at the end of their breeding season by the U.S.Fish & Wildlife Service. Instead of the 73 reported in 1935, the biologists responsible for management of the trumpeter swans tabulated 571. The birds were mostly found in the vicinity of the federal refuges which protect their habitat amid farms and ranches. Good work!

WHOOPING CRANES are still in a most precarious condition not very far from extinction. An aerial census on the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge on the Texas coast turned up just 22 of them, one less than last year. Two additional birds are in a New Orleans zoo. The National Audubon Society is planning intensified educational efforts to combat indifferent killing of the birds by hunters.

A CHANCE FOR COOPERATION

There is a need for setting aside special sanctuaries for rare or endangered mammals and birds. For instance, the White Mountain shrew (Sorex tenellus) is now confined to a few stations along small streams of the Charleston Mountains in southern Nevada. Only about 15 specimens have been collected. It is evidently threatened by grazing, and some study should be undertaken with a view to safeguarding its existence.

In a similar vein, some definite action should be taken to provide a complete guarantee of future habitat to such rare birds as the Cape Sable seaside sparrow and the dusky seaside sparrow. Apparently adequate census data are not available for either of these two species and there seems to be no guarantee that their habitats will be preserved.

The Nature Conservancy is eager to cooperate with other scientific organizations in sponsoring these and similar studies.

REGIONAL NOTES

ARIZONA: Coronado National Memorial has just been established as a unit of the National Park Service. Located entirely within the Coronado National Forest, this 2,745-acre scenic area includes Coronado Peak from which may be obtained a sweeping view of the region traversed by the Spanish explorer, Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, and his men on their journey in 1540 from Mexico into what is now the United States.

This project was originally conceived as an international memorial under the joint auspices of Mexico and the U.S. Congress authorized it in that form in 1941. Last July, legislation amending the 1941 Act was enacted which authorized the establishment, by Presidential proclamation, of a national instead of an international memorial. It is hoped that the way will soon be cleared for the Mexican Government to set aside lands for a companion memorial so that the long-cherished idea of an international memorial commemorating the Coronado expedition may be realized.

Miss Grace M. Sparks of Bisbee, Arizona, has been a leader in the movement to establish the Memorial.

FLORIDA: Articles in Mosquito News for June 1952 indicate clearly that mosquito control experts in Florida have the opinion that chemical controls are only a partial answer, and that wholesale drainage and other engineering approaches are the lasting solution. This applies to the specific kind of mosquito found in the Florida marshes. Intensified and expanded drainage efforts are underway, especially in coastal marshes. The entire coastal area of Florida is covered by mosquito control districts except for 2 counties. (It is difficult to avoid the conviction that natural areas and certain other wildlife lands can be protected only by acquistion and vigorous guardianship. Never before in the U.S. have "undeveloped" lands been attacked by so many interests. Mosquito control, agricultural expansion, industrialization, resort development, and suburbanization are proceeding at a rate that would have been incredible 20 years ago.)

NEW JERSEY: "Negotiations are underway for the dedication of from one-fourth to one-third of the Sandy Hook area by the U. S. Army to the State for use as a seashore park. An appropriation of $500,000 is now available for the beginning of the development of the area when the negotiations are complete. The area is of interest to foresters, especially because of the unique holly forest. This will be included in that part of the Hook which the State will take over and supervise.

"An appropriation of $2,000,000 is available under which the State is negotiating for, and expects to acquire, a property known as the Wharton Estate in Atlantic, Burlington, and Camden Counties with a total area of approximately 100,000 acres. This property is almost altogether undeveloped wilderness and will be managed as a combination forest, wildlife, water and recreation reservation." —from Allegheny News, Allegheny Section of the Society of American Foresters, January 1953.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
1840 MINTWOOD PLACE, N. W.
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FORM 3547 REQUESTED

The Nature Conservancy is an independent member-governed organization dedicated to saving America's heritage of wild nature. Its specific object is to preserve natural areas as "living museums" of the primeval wilderness. Such tracts are precious for their scientific, educational, and esthetic values. They also afford a home for the multitude of kinds of living things that would otherwise vanish from the earth, destroyed by our civilization.

The work of our organization began in 1917 under the direction of a committee of the Ecological Society of America. In 1946 the Ecologists Union was formed to take over these tasks. In 1950 its name was changed to the Nature Conservancy.

We, the members of the Nature Conservancy, invite you to join with us in this work. Membership is open to both individuals and organizations. Your contribution is an allowable income tax deduction.

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NEWS FLASHES — See page 2

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Porcupine Mountains

"THIS IS THE FOREST PRIMEVAL, The murmuring pines and the hemlocks . . ."

Few areas in Michigan possess more of a wilderness atmosphere than the Porcupine Mountains. Here we find a remnant of the original forest which covered vast areas of northern Michigan before the white man, with his saw and axe, denuded them. We can take pride in the fact that this 55,000-acre tract of relatively undisturbed timber belongs to the people; we can be proud that the people demand that it remain a wilderness.

No roads dissect the Porcupine Mountains State Park; and, as long as the public continues to support the present policies governing the management of this park, no roads will be permitted. Foot trails take the place of roads, and many miles of them crisscross the area. These trails are rugged, and a pack weighs heavily by day's end; but one is well repaid for weariness if he enjoys solitude, and nature's handiwork.

Big timber here can still be seen. Giant specimens of pine and hemlock, yellow birch and maple ranging up to four and five feet in diameter and one hundred feet, or more, in height, are commonplace.

Clear cold streams emerging from the hills, plunge down the rocky slopes and leap the sheer escarpments. Waterfalls and rapids lend wild beauty to these waters. Speckled trout lurk in the quiet pools and gurgling riffles where they may test the skill of any fisherman.

Deer and bear find food and shelter in the wooded hills and in the dark seclusion of the valleys. Bald eagles circle high above the tallest trees; ospreys patrol the stream or fish for "coasters" near the shore of Lake Superior; startled ravens croak at the intruder and take wing as he approaches them; pileated woodpeckers police the woods and hammer out their messages remote from humankind which they refuse to tolerate. The wolf finds freedom here to hunt and rear his young. God grant that he may ever find it thus, lest he be added to the list of animals which *used to live* in Michigan.

The Porcupines are no less beautiful when snow sifts down and spreads a deep white blanket on the land. Snow-laden branches, white domes and arches, frosty spires replace familiar scenes and turn the forest into fairyland. Scenes such as this are the reward of those who have the hardihood to walk the snowbound trails equipped with snowshoes or with skis. One need not fear a night out in the wilderness, for trail-side cabins will be found beneath the pines for the convenience of a cold or weary traveler.

--editorial by
R. D. Burroughs in
Michigan Conservation
January-February, 1953

"But a little lonesome space where nature has her own way, where it is quiet enough at night for one to hear the patter of small paws on leaves and the murmuring of birds, can still be afforded in these troubled days. The gift of tranquility, wherever found, is beyond price."
—New York Times editorial, October 5, 1952